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ABSTRACT

After examining the foundation of Florida Junior College's (FJC's) Faculty Exchange Program, which involved gaining administrative support and making necessary contacts with other colleges, this descriptive report goes on to recount the experiences of the first three sets of instructors to be exchanged. First, the report describes the selection of a social science professor and two alternates from FJC and of a professor of literature and drama at Nelson and Colne College (N&CC) in England and then relates the acclimatization of each to different educational systems, climates, and houses. The report continues with a discussion of the unexpected difficulties which occurred prior to the second exchange of an FJC psychology professor and an N&CC engineering professor and the unplanned benefit of the establishment of a Women's Center at N&CC. Next, the exchange of a communications professor from Montreal's Dawson College with one from FJC is described. Suggestions for avoiding problems are then presented with regard to health insurance, inspection of the exchange college, personalities of the professors, finances, and the importance of having alternates. An enumeration of the benefits of the program precedes the final section which offers ten suggestions for starting a faculty exchange program. (AYC)

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FACULTY EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

BY

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FACULTY EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

1. THE START OF FJC'S FACULTY EXCHANGE PROGRAM

a. The Faculty Exchange Program

By the mid 70's, FJC had a well established and very active Staff Development Office. This office continually seeks to develop innovative programs for faculty and administrators as alternatives to traditional classroom instruction.

We began to consider developing an international program which would allow faculty to exchange teaching positions with a faculty member at an institution in another country. Such a program would allow faculty to become totally involved in the job responsibilities of another educational program through the host college. Additionally, the program would sharpen cultural awareness and increase professional competencies which are needed by the successful educator.

b. Administrative Support

As we began to outline such a program, the Staff Development Office kept open lines of communication with the administrative unit at FJC. A program of this size can't get off the ground unless you have the support and commitment of key administrators and the Board of Trustees.

c. Contacts

The next step was to establish contacts with colleges similar to our own institution. In order to develop an exchange program, you have got to get out and meet people, and this usually can be done at major conferences which include international participants. Once you have established your contacts, pursue them, keep up active correspondence. Don't let the project die! But don't count on immediate results.

For example, our contact with Nelson and Colne College in England was made when I was introduced to Mr. David Moore, the Principal, while he was visiting the States. We both were interested in developing international programs at our respective institutions, and the more we talked, the better the idea sounded. From that meeting, one full year of hard work went into implementing our first faculty exchange.

2. FJC'S FIRST EXCHANGE: TAKING THE PLUNGE

a. College-wide promotion

In the Fall of 1978 we sent fliers to all faculty and administrators in the college advertising an Exchange Program with Nelson and Colne College. FJC's International Education Advisory Committee met and recommended a faculty member and 2 alternates. But by the time the exchange occurred, the originally selected faculty member as well as the first alternate had withdrawn.

b. Jim Mayes - David Chaytor

Jim Mayes, a Social Science professor at FJC, left for England with his wife and young son shortly after Christmas in 1978. Nelson and Colne College selected David Chaytor, a professor of Literature and Drama as their representative, and the two professors had decided they would exchange residences and cars, not to mention one cat. A verbal agreement sufficed to establish who would pay for what bills.

Jim's first few weeks in the United Kingdom were challenging. The British educational system was very different from that of the U.S., and Jim found that he had to adapt his teaching methods and curriculum to meet the needs of his new students. He had to utilize his years of teaching experience to develop a course which would stimulate interest in American History and Sociology among a group of students who were primarily in college to learn a vocation.

In addition to professional readjustment, the professors coped

mightily with personal readjustment. Flexibility is the key word in every type of international program, and it was certainly true here. Jim, who had spent most of his life in Alabama, suddenly found himself throwing logs in the fireplace in a cottage in England while the snow swirled about outside. .Meanwhile, David found himself learning to reside in an appliance-filled house in one of the hottest states in the country. As the term approached an end, each instructor contacted his home institution and asked if his stay could be extended. What better proof of a successful exchange?

3. ROUND 2: MORE EXCHANGES

a. England

While our first exchange with Nelson and Colne was still in progress, FJC advertised for another exchange to take place in the Fall of 1979. Announcements went out in February and by April the Advisory Committee had recommended a faculty member and a first alternate.

- o On the surface this appeared to be a perfect exchange: both professors taught engineering, and both wanted to bring their families along on the exchange. Each one had been at his respective college for a number of years and was well-established in the teaching profession.
- o Nothing is ever perfect. One week before FJC's professor was to leave for England, he fell while cleaning his garage and fractured a few ribs.
- o FJC immediately turned to its alternate - a professor of psychology with 2 young children - and gave her 48 to decide.
- o She said yes, packed a few bags and left with her children for Nelson and Colne. If she had declined, that would have meant about 9 months of planning and program development would be down the drain.
- o Pat Ellis, FJC's professor, not only taught her assigned course at Nelson and Colne College, but she also established a Women's Center there and taught an Assertiveness Training class to ladies of the community.

- o Pat's counter-part, Brian Threlfall, bounded off the plane upon arrival in Jacksonville with his wife and teen-aged son. He steadily maintained his enthusiasm for the personal and professional aspects of the exchange throughout his five months at FJC. Brian proved to be an excellent, albeit temporary, addition to our Engineering Department.
- o As was the case in the first exchange, both participants in this second exchange were reluctant to return home.

b. Canada

The Canadian Exchange with Dawson College in Montreal was two years in the making. FJC's President Ben Wygal and met Dawson College's President Robert Gordon and they discussed a possible exchange program. The exchange finally got off the ground in 1979.

- o We advertised this exchange in November 1978, but it wasn't until the following Fall Term 1979 that the exchange occurred.
- o For a while it looked like we would be able to arrange two Canadian exchanges that Fall Term, but it turned out that we had only one.
- o Both exchange professors taught Communications and experienced an unusually peaceable exchange.

4. OBSTACLES TO AVOID AND PROGRAM BENEFITS

a. Obstacles

1. We have learned that it is essential to be absolutely certain that all exchange participants and their families are covered by HEALTH INSURANCE. One of our British exchangees neglected to obtain health insurance for himself and his family during his stay at FJC. Unfortunately, he became ill and required surgery while in Florida. When he was hospitalized, he faced thousand of dollars worth of medical bills. Neither one of the exchange colleges could offer assistance since this was a part of personal arrangements the participants were requested to handle. Before your exchange professor arrives at your college, confirm that his family is covered by health insurance -- NEVER ASSUME!
2. Inspection of Exchange College - Another delicate point centers on the having someone from your college visit the cooperating college ahead of time to review facilities and programs. Although this point is subject to debate, FJC prefers to inspect the cooperating college before committing itself to an exchange program. We have never sent a faculty member to a college that was not first reviewed and recommended by one of our administrators.
3. Another potential problem is the exchange professors themselves. One-to-one exchanges are preferred, but how much consideration should be given to personalities of individuals being selected? For example, what if you have a perfect one-to-one discipline

match-up, but you know from experience that your professor doesn't have the temperament to be a good representative of your institution. HOW MUCH WEIGHT SHOULD BE GIVEN TO PERSONALITY FACTORS IN MAKING A DECISION?

4. As in most cases, money can be a problem. At FJC, we pay round trip transportation costs for our professor traveling to another institution. In some cases, other colleges do not absorb these costs and require their professors to assume their own costs. Our thinking at FJC is that if the institution supports an Exchange Program, it should stand behind it with some financial assistance.
5. One of our exchanges was tossed into turmoil at the eleventh hour when our FJC professor scheduled to go to England had to withdraw because of medical reasons just days before the departure date. Such an extreme situation can very well cancel the entire exchange for that semester. Fortunately, we turned to the first alternate and explained that she had 2 days to decide if she wanted to participate. She said yes and it has been one of our most successful exchanges.

b. Benefits

1. Immediate and in-depth experience for faculty, enabling them to become totally involved in the job responsibilities at a host college.
2. Provides for cultural enrichment that is the essential background for developing increased cultural awareness and pro-

fessional competencies which are needed by the successful educator.

3. The excitement generated by these exchanges cannot be over-emphasized. Faculty and administrators are eager to have lengthy discussions with the exchangee. A greater number of students attend special lectures and events coordinated by the visiting exchange professor. Upon completion of the exchange, the spark of excitement continues to burn.

The home institution instructor, upon his return, transmits a vitality in classroom situations because of his/her recent experiences that is noticed by students and faculty alike.

4. Improves teaching methods through exposure to and interaction with students and faculty in a foreign educational institution.
5. Provides an international dimension to the College's curriculum through the incorporation of materials and experience acquired.
6. Enhances the faculty's communication with and understanding of individuals in countries and cultures other than their own.

5. HOW TO START AN EXCHANGE PROGRAM AT YOUR SCHOOL

- a. Survey faculty and determine the scope and degree of interest for an exchange program.
- b. Secure support of top administrators and governing board members. The most successful exchange programs are those which are fully supported by the entire college. It is important that all levels of administration be kept informed of the college's activities in international education.
- c. Consider the country with which you wish to arrange an exchange:
 1. Obviously language is an important factor to consider. Since only a limited number of faculty speak a language other than English, it is best to begin with English-speaking countries. England, Canada, Scotland are good starting points for an exchange, in addition to any of the colleges and universities in the United States. You may wish to investigate an exchange at an American Indian college within the States.
 2. Climate is a significant factor to keep in mind. For example, we at Florida Junior College have learned that it is very difficult to find faculty members who are interested in relocating for a semester to a country such as Canada or England during winter months. Not only would it mean spending months in a freezing climate, but it also represents a significant investment in a winter wardrobe for all of the family members.

Exotic areas, such as Hawaii, are very attractive to Floridians. However, Hawaiians just are not interested in spending 5 months in Florida, as a rule. They seem to prefer more mountainous, cooler regions -- something different to what they are accustomed.

3. Make contact with individuals in the country in which you are interested. Work through organizations: the AACJC, Consortia/Cooperative groups, and attend conferences!

The TransAtlantic Institute, composed of educators from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, meets annually to discuss directions in education. This year the Institute will be meeting in the United States, at Jacksonville Beach, Florida. Florida Junior College at Jacksonville will be hosting the 10-day forum. This would be an excellent place to make international contacts.

4. Consider the educational structure of a potential exchange institution. Is it similar to your college? Does it reach the same groups/types of people?
5. Exchange of residences has become a major factor in exchange programs. This is a financial necessity in most cases. You cannot expect your exchange professor to continue to make his regular mortgage payments on his home, and also rent an apartment in another country for five months, while still receiving his regular salary. Experience dictates that residential exchanges should be handled by the individuals involved, and not their colleges.

6. FJC pays its exchange professors 100% of their salary while they are participants in the program. Additionally, college employees continue to receive full benefits and are fully covered under Workmen's Compensation.
7. An information package on the respective colleges and surrounding regions should be sent to prospective exchangees. Remember, you would be interested in knowing as much as possible if you were going to another country. It takes just a few minutes to assemble some information, usually provided by the Chamber of Commerce, and send it off.
8. The work load and working conditions must be defined as accurately as possible in each individual case. This should include such things as teaching load, preparation time, type of student, details of course content and testing procedure, whether a single or shared office, procedure for obtaining equipment and supplies; all understood and agreed to in advance.
9. It would be wise to pair the exchangee with a faculty member who can act as an advisor and troubleshooter. There must be someone to turn to when problems arise.
10. The colleges involved must work out a schedule to fully utilize the talents and abilities of the exchangees. This can involve much more than simply teaching classes. Perhaps speaking engagements in the community, or acting as a resource consultant in other college departments would be useful.

Exchanges never seem to be fully utilized, especially those from differing countries and cultural backgrounds. This knowledge could and should be shared in a community setting outside the classroom. This is not meant to overwork the exchangee. It is simply that his or her talents must be utilized to the fullest extent possible. This makes for a more meaningful work experience. Outside college activities and use as a resource consultant should form an integral part of an exchangee's workload.

6. CONCLUSION

After three successful exchanges, FJC is even more committed to this type of program. Our exchanges continue to provide opportunities for personal, professional, and ultimately, institutional enrichment.

Faculty members who participate in these exchanges are important components in FJC's plan to internationalize the curriculum.

And finally, as we continue to strengthen our international ties, more and more do we realize that differences among peoples are not to be considered as signs of weakness, but rather an indication of strength through diversity.

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